

A large, rusty, and broken key is positioned diagonally across the frame. The key is made of a dark, textured metal, possibly iron or steel, and shows significant signs of corrosion and wear. The head of the key is on the left, featuring a complex, multi-toothed design. The shaft of the key extends towards the right, ending in a simple circular ring. The background is a bright blue sky with soft, wispy white clouds. The text "Keys to" is written in a stylized, orange-brown font in the upper right quadrant, and "Negative Accuracy" is written in the same font in the lower left quadrant.

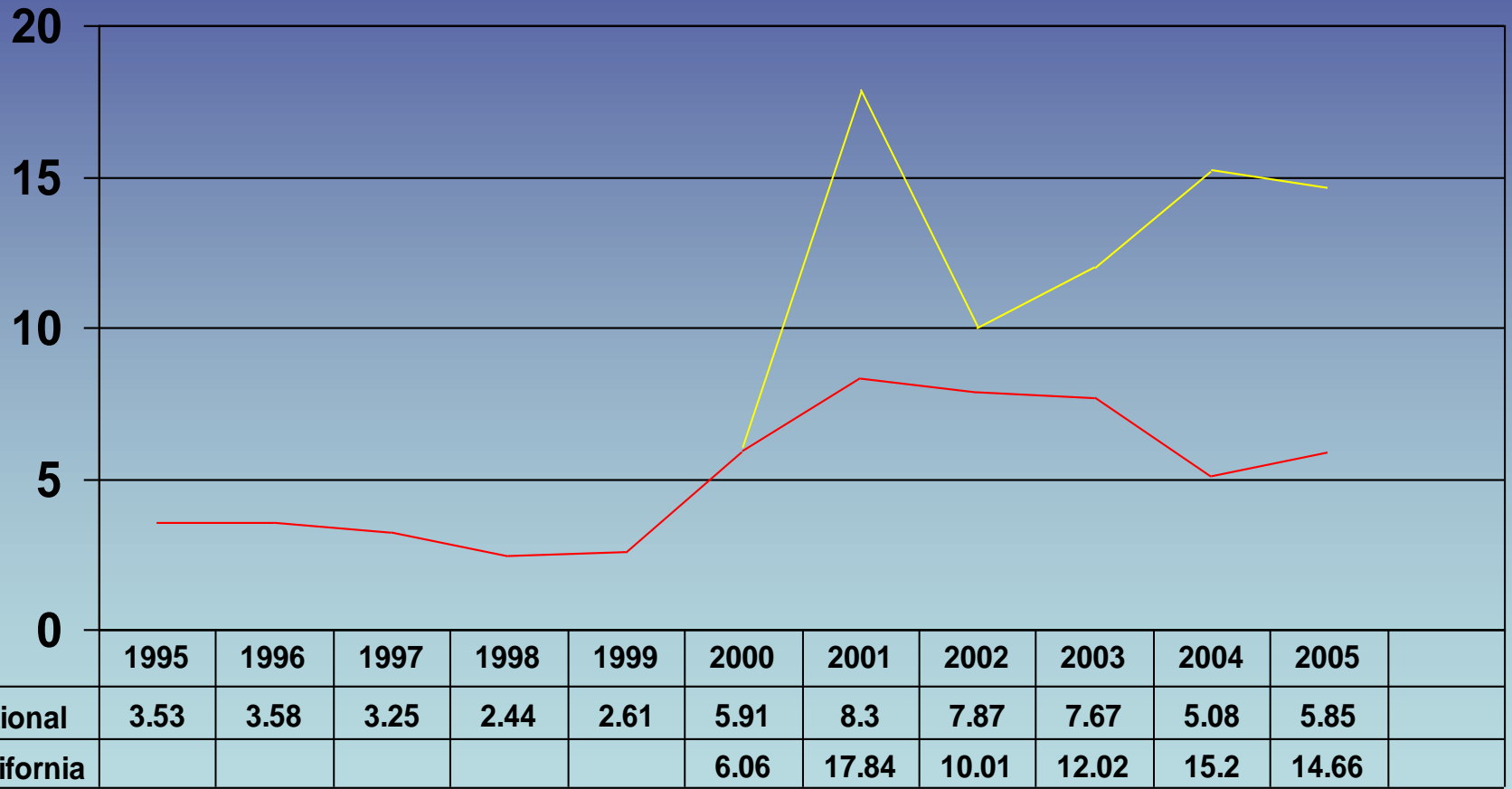
Keys to

Negative  
Accuracy

# Food Stamp Program Quality Control

## Negative Error Rates

### FFY 1995 - 2005



| Reported Negative Error Rates |        |      | /1            | 8/22/2006 |  |
|-------------------------------|--------|------|---------------|-----------|--|
| <u>BY RANK</u>                |        |      |               |           |  |
| State                         | Oct.   | Apr. | Sample Months |           |  |
|                               | FY2006 | Rank | 13            |           |  |
| NEW JERSEY                    | 0.00   | 1    |               |           |  |
| NEBRASKA                      | 0.00   | 2    |               |           |  |
| SOUTH DAKOTA                  | 0.00   | 3    |               |           |  |
| VERMONT                       | 0.00   | 4    |               |           |  |
| MONTANA                       | 0.42   | 5    |               |           |  |
| MINNESOTA                     | 0.43   | 6    |               |           |  |
| PENNSYLVANIA                  | 0.47   | 7    |               |           |  |
| SOUTH CAROLINA                | 1.29   | 8    |               |           |  |
| NORTH CAROLINA                | 1.53   | 9    |               |           |  |
| NEVADA                        | 1.62   | 10   |               |           |  |
| ALABAMA                       | 1.70   | 11   |               |           |  |
| LOUISIANA                     | 1.94   | 12   |               |           |  |
| UTAH                          | 2.02   | 13   |               |           |  |
| NEW HAMPSHIRE                 | 2.23   | 14   |               |           |  |
| CONNECTICUT                   | 2.41   | 15   |               |           |  |
| MASSACHUSETTS                 | 2.49   | 16   |               |           |  |
| ALASKA                        | 2.55   | 17   |               |           |  |
| OKLAHOMA                      | 2.56   | 18   |               |           |  |
| WASHINGTON                    | 2.62   | 19   |               |           |  |
| TENNESSEE                     | 2.78   | 20   |               |           |  |
| FLORIDA                       | 3.02   | 21   |               |           |  |
| ARKANSAS                      | 3.30   | 22   |               |           |  |
| RHODE ISLAND                  | 3.30   | 23   |               |           |  |
| NORTH DAKOTA                  | 3.45   | 24   |               |           |  |
| MISSOURI                      | 3.50   | 25   |               |           |  |
| KENTUCKY                      | 3.67   | 26   |               |           |  |
| GEORGIA                       | 3.78   | 27   |               |           |  |
| HAWAII                        | 3.80   | 28   |               |           |  |
| MISSISSIPPI                   | 4.01   | 29   |               |           |  |
| KANSAS                        | 4.32   | 30   |               |           |  |
| NEW MEXICO                    | 4.36   | 31   |               |           |  |
| VIRGIN ISLANDS                | 4.71   | 32   |               |           |  |
| OREGON                        | 4.80   | 33   |               |           |  |
| IOWA                          | 4.82   | 34   |               |           |  |
| NEW YORK                      | 5.48   | 35   |               |           |  |
| OHIO                          | 6.02   | 36   |               |           |  |
| INDIANA                       | 6.14   | 37   |               |           |  |
| WYOMING                       | 6.15   | 38   |               |           |  |
| IDAHO                         | 6.49   | 39   |               |           |  |
| WEST VIRGINIA                 | 6.52   | 40   |               |           |  |
| VIRGINIA                      | 7.23   | 41   |               |           |  |
| ARIZONA                       | 8.10   | 42   |               |           |  |
| TEXAS                         | 8.65   | 43   |               |           |  |
| WISCONSIN                     | 9.46   | 44   |               |           |  |
| ILLINOIS                      | 9.55   | 45   |               |           |  |
| CALIFORNIA                    | 9.76   | 46   |               |           |  |
| COLORADO                      | 11.52  | 47   |               |           |  |
| GUAM                          | 11.82  | 48   |               |           |  |
| MARYLAND                      | 13.20  | 49   |               |           |  |
| DELAWARE                      | 13.84  | 50   |               |           |  |
| DIST. OF COL.                 | 15.53  | 51   |               |           |  |
| MICHIGAN                      | 18.10  | 52   |               |           |  |
| MAINE                         | 28.40  | 53   |               |           |  |

| Reported Negative Error Rates |         |        | /1     |   |  |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|---|--|
| <u>IMPROVEMENT</u>            |         |        |        |   |  |
| State                         | FY2005  | Oct.   | Apr.   |   |  |
|                               |         | FY2006 | Change |   |  |
| MARYLAND                      | 25.00   | 13.20  | -11.80 | 1 |  |
| GUAM                          | 19.08   | 11.82  | -7.26  | 2 |  |
| UTAH                          | 6.95    | 2.02   | -4.93  |   |  |
| VERMONT                       | 4.87    | 0.00   | -4.87  |   |  |
| IDAHO                         | 10.61   | 6.49   | -4.12  |   |  |
| NEVADA                        | 5.60    | 1.62   | -3.98  |   |  |
| RHODE ISLAND                  | 7.07    | 3.30   | -3.77  |   |  |
| OKLAHOMA                      | 5.29    | 2.56   | -2.73  |   |  |
| TENNESSEE                     | 5.26    | 2.78   | -2.48  |   |  |
| ILLINOIS                      | 11.49   | 9.55   | -1.94  |   |  |
| COLORADO                      | 12.97   | 11.52  | -1.45  |   |  |
| CALIFORNIA                    | 11.20   | 9.76   | -1.44  |   |  |
| VIRGINIA                      | 8.44    | 7.23   | -1.21  |   |  |
| ARKANSAS                      | 4.43    | 3.30   | -1.13  |   |  |
| PENNSYLVANIA                  | 1.43    | 0.47   | -0.96  |   |  |
| GEORGIA                       | 4.71    | 3.78   | -0.93  |   |  |
| NEW YORK                      | 6.29    | 5.48   | -0.81  |   |  |
| MASSACHUSETTS                 | 3.15    | 2.49   | -0.66  |   |  |
| HAWAII                        | 4.43    | 3.80   | -0.63  |   |  |
| ALABAMA                       | 2.30    | 1.70   | -0.60  |   |  |
| OHIO                          | 6.58    | 6.02   | -0.56  |   |  |
| KENTUCKY                      | 4.15    | 3.67   | -0.48  |   |  |
| CONNECTICUT                   | 2.89    | 2.41   | -0.48  |   |  |
| NEW JERSEY                    | 0.46    | 0.00   | -0.46  |   |  |
| SOUTH DAKOTA                  | 0.27    | 0.00   | -0.27  |   |  |
| NEBRASKA                      | 0.20    | 0.00   | -0.20  |   |  |
| MISSOURI                      | 3.50    | 3.50   | 0.00   |   |  |
| NORTH CAROLINA                | 1.46    | 1.53   | 0.07   |   |  |
| MONTANA                       | 0.22    | 0.42   | 0.20   |   |  |
| SOUTH CAROLINA                | 1.02    | 1.29   | 0.27   |   |  |
| NEW HAMPSHIRE                 | 1.91    | 2.23   | 0.32   |   |  |
| NEW MEXICO                    | 4.01    | 4.36   | 0.35   |   |  |
| MINNESOTA                     | 0.00    | 0.43   | 0.43   |   |  |
| KANSAS                        | 3.76    | 4.32   | 0.56   |   |  |
| ARIZONA                       | 7.34    | 8.10   | 0.76   |   |  |
| WASHINGTON                    | 1.69    | 2.62   | 0.93   |   |  |
| FLORIDA                       | 2.02    | 3.02   | 1.00   |   |  |
| WEST VIRGINIA                 | 4.83    | 6.52   | 1.69   |   |  |
| ALASKA                        | 0.79    | 2.55   | 1.76   |   |  |
| IOWA                          | 2.93    | 4.82   | 1.89   |   |  |
| INDIANA                       | 4.18    | 6.14   | 1.96   |   |  |
| VIRGIN ISLANDS                | 2.67    | 4.71   | 2.04   |   |  |
| TEXAS                         | 6.46    | 8.65   | 2.19   |   |  |
| WYOMING                       | 3.73    | 6.15   | 2.42   |   |  |
| OREGON                        | 2.17    | 4.80   | 2.63   |   |  |
| NORTH DAKOTA                  | 0.74    | 3.45   | 2.71   |   |  |
| WISCONSIN                     | 6.33    | 9.46   | 3.13   |   |  |
| MICHIGAN                      | 13.89   | 18.10  | 4.21   |   |  |
| DIST. OF COL.                 | 8.59    | 15.53  | 6.94   |   |  |
| DELAWARE                      | 6.38    | 13.84  | 7.46   |   |  |
| MAINE                         | 1.45    | 28.40  | 26.95  |   |  |
| LOUISIANA                     | Katrina | 1.94   | n/a    |   |  |
| MISSISSIPPI                   | Katrina | 4.01   | n/a    |   |  |

Federal Data Reporting and Analysis Bureau  
Food Stamp NEGATIVE Case Summary  
FFY 2006 Food Stamps - October through April 2006

| County         | Sampled Cases | NSTR Cases | Reviewable Cases (Sampled less NSTR) | COMPLETION RATE |                                   | DROP RATE     |                                 | ERROR RATE  |                                    |
|----------------|---------------|------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|-------------|------------------------------------|
|                |               |            |                                      | Completed Cases | Percent of Review Cases Completed | Dropped Cases | Percent of Review Cases Dropped | Error Cases | Percent of Review Cases in Error** |
| STATEWIDE      | 1029          | 596        | 433                                  | 420             | 97.0                              | 13            | 3.0                             | 41          | 9.8                                |
| 39 Counties    | 150           | 87         | 63                                   | 58              | 92.1                              | 5             | 7.9                             | 0           | 0                                  |
| Alameda        | 48            | 33         | 15                                   | 11              | 73.3                              | 4             | 26.7                            | 0           | 0                                  |
| Contra Costa   | 15            | 8          | 7                                    | 5               | 71.4                              | 2             | 28.6                            | 1           | 20.0                               |
| Fresno         | 36            | 24         | 12                                   | 12              | 100.0                             | 0             | 0                               | 0           | 0                                  |
| Kern           | 38            | 23         | 15                                   | 15              | 100.0                             | 0             | 0                               | 2           | 13.3                               |
| Los Angeles    | 313           | 156        | 157                                  | 157             | 100.0                             | 0             | 0                               | 18          | 11.5                               |
| Merced         | 12            | 9          | 3                                    | 3               | 100.0                             | 0             | 0                               | 0           | 0                                  |
| Monterey       | 20            | 19         | 1                                    | 1               | 100.0                             | 0             | 0                               | 0           | 0                                  |
| Orange         | 50            | 38         | 12                                   | 12              | 100.0                             | 0             | 0                               | 0           | 0                                  |
| Riverside      | 44            | 27         | 17                                   | 17              | 100.0                             | 0             | 0                               | 5           | 29.4                               |
| Sacramento     | 45            | 25         | 20                                   | 20              | 100.0                             | 0             | 0                               | 4           | 20.0                               |
| San Bernardino | 68            | 36         | 32                                   | 32              | 100.0                             | 0             | 0                               | 3           | 9.4                                |
| San Diego      | 39            | 13         | 26                                   | 25              | 96.2                              | 1             | 3.8                             | 4           | 16.0                               |
| San Francisco  | 32            | 18         | 14                                   | 13              | 92.9                              | 1             | 7.1                             | 1           | 7.7                                |
| San Joaquin    | 21            | 16         | 5                                    | 5               | 100.0                             | 0             | 0                               | 0           | 0                                  |
| Santa Clara    | 23            | 12         | 11                                   | 11              | 100.0                             | 0             | 0                               | 0           | 0                                  |
| Solano         | 9             | 5          | 4                                    | 4               | 100.0                             | 0             | 0                               | 0           | 0                                  |
| Stanislaus     | 19            | 14         | 5                                    | 5               | 100.0                             | 0             | 0                               | 0           | 0                                  |
| Tulare         | 36            | 28         | 8                                    | 8               | 100.0                             | 0             | 0                               | 3           | 37.5                               |
| Ventura        | 11            | 5          | 6                                    | 6               | 100.0                             | 0             | 0                               | 0           | 0                                  |

Data are from the Post 10-day window file.

\*\*These error rates are based on Q5 findings that have been overlaid with federal differences. They are preliminary, non regressed numbers that are to be used for trend analysis purposes only.

NOTE: The drop rate column has been changed to reflect the percent of drop cases to reviewable cases rather than to completed cases. This is consistent with last year's report.

FFY2005 Rates: Complete Cases=97.2% Dropped Cases=2.8% Error Cases=11.4%

FFY2004 Rates: Complete Cases=94.2% Dropped Cases=5.8% Error Cases= 9.6%

September 11, 2006

# Status

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- A Corrective Action Plan is required if the negative rate is above one percent.
- Currently, forty-six states have a negative error rate above one percent.
- California submitted a CAP with the goal for FFY 2006 of a ten percent state reported rate.
- Current rate through April is 9.76%.

# Concerns



- Workload pressure to dispose a case prior to 30 days
- Cutbacks (Budgets and staffing)
- Failure to verify
- Case file retrieval and documentation issues \*\*\*

\*\*\* NOMI

# Notice Of Missed Interview NOMI

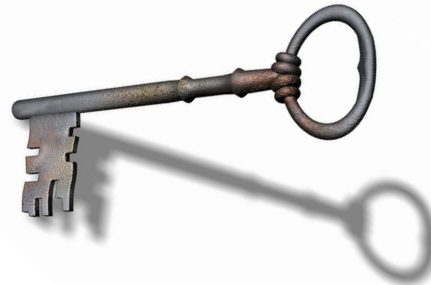
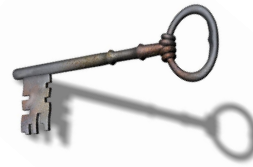
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- If the county agency denies the application for a missed interview but fails to send a NOMI to the applying household renders the negative action **invalid**.
- FNS will give states until the start of the fiscal year 2007 QC review period to begin reviewing all negative denials applying the above NOMI requirement.



# Keys to Lowering the Negative Error Rate

- Top Leadership Commitment
- Data Analysis
- Case Reviews
- Corrective Action Planning
- Verification and Documentation
- Computer Enhancements
- Resource/Reference Tools for the Worker
- Tools for the Client

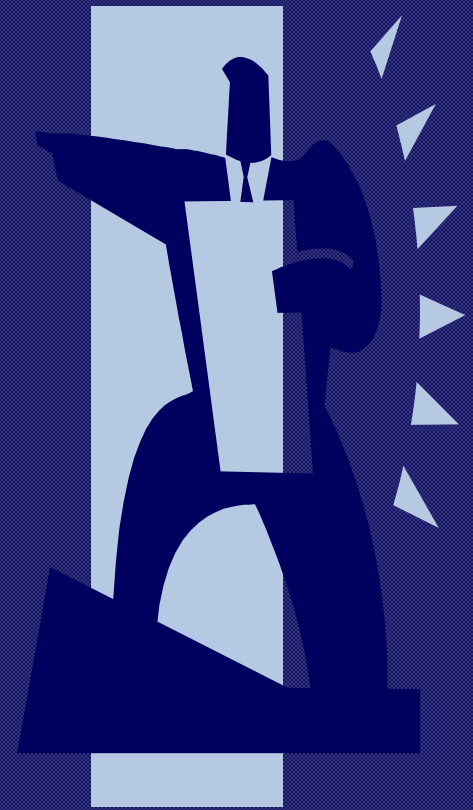




# Top Leadership Commitment

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- Is the cornerstone to achieving and sustaining high FSP payment accuracy which includes the validity of negative actions.
- Acknowledges that the negative error rate impacts program access and makes improving the negative error rate an agency-wide priority.
- Sets the expectation that households applying for benefits receive an accurate determination of eligibility and those found not eligible receive timely and accurate notice of denial, suspension, or termination.



# How Does Top Leadership Convey Its Commitment?

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- The agency's performance goal is expressed to staff at all levels.
- Staff is held accountable for the negative error rate.
- Staff is acknowledged and rewarded for negative error rate improvements and excellence.



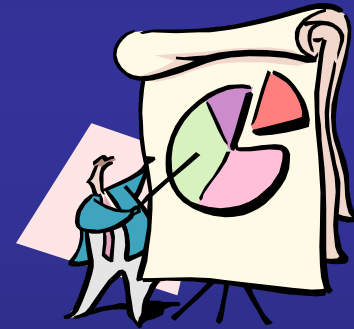
# How Does Top Leadership Convey Its Commitment?

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- It is receptive to, and appreciates new ideas for administering the Program.
- Corrective action plans are targeted and there is buy-in and understanding of what must be accomplished at all levels.
- Supports and encourages open communication among county agency staff and between State staff to ensure that error causes are identified and eliminated.
- Supports system changes necessary to reduce error causes and makes these changes a priority.

# Data Analysis

- The foundation for corrective action planning is good data analysis.
- Gathering the data
- Understanding the all the data
- Monitor the data on a continual basis
- Review errors to identify the source
- Review reports to determine effectiveness



# Case Reviews

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- A good case review system is a successful tool in attaining and maintaining high payment accuracy.
- The same holds true for ensuring a high level of validity for negative actions.
- Proven to be an integral part of overall management of the Program.

# Case Reviews

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Different Approaches to case reviews –

- Short Term Projects
- Peer Reviews
- Supervisory Case Reviews
- Third Party Reviews
- New Worker Reviews
- Targeted Case Reviews
- Error Review Committees



# Corrective Action Planning

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- Process by which agency document initiatives to reduce or eliminate deficiencies including invalid negative actions.
- Preparing thorough yet easy to implement Corrective Action Plan can be as simple or complex as you want it to be.
- Examples of what information should be in the write-up for each corrective action initiative are listed in handout as well as a sample format sheet.



# Verification and Documentation

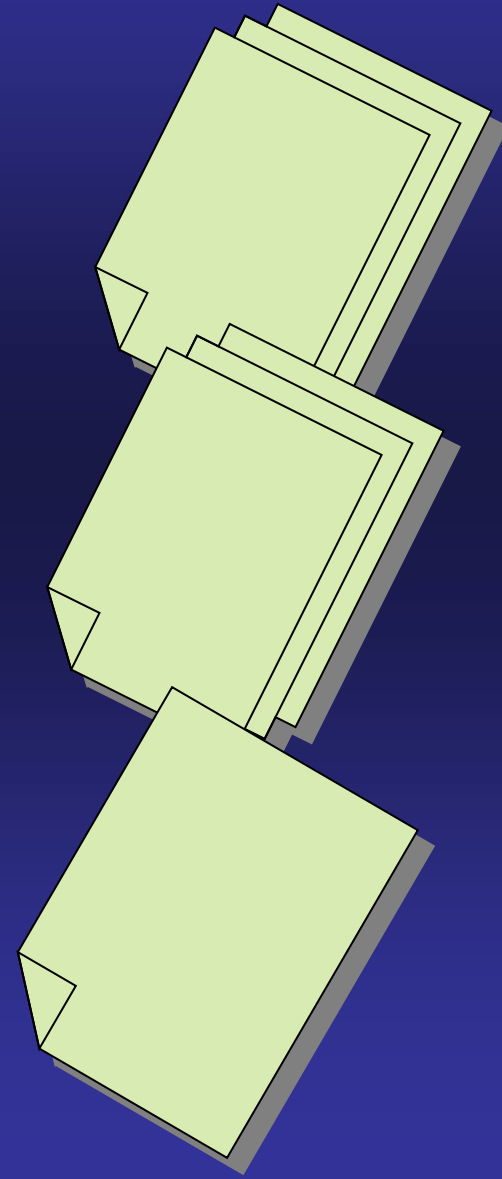
- An important strategy for achieving a low negative error rate is to ensure that the case record fully documents the circumstances that led to the denial, suspension, or termination of the case.
- The case record, whether paper and/or automated, tells the story of the client's circumstances, and
- In order verify the accuracy of the case determination of the negative action, anyone reviewing the case record should be able to come to the same determination.



# Verification and Documentation

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- Along with the case file documentation all required verifications must be provided and documented.
- The final determination of denial, suspension, or termination along with the Notice to the client must also be documented in the case record.
- The Notice must be sent timely and must fully document the reason for the negative action.



# Verification and Documentation

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- If the State selects a negative action for review, all case record information that was used to make the decision to deny, suspend or terminate the case and all notices to the client, including information housed on the automated eligibility system, will be reviewed.



- The documentation must provide enough detail to allow the reviewer to determine the validity of the negative action.

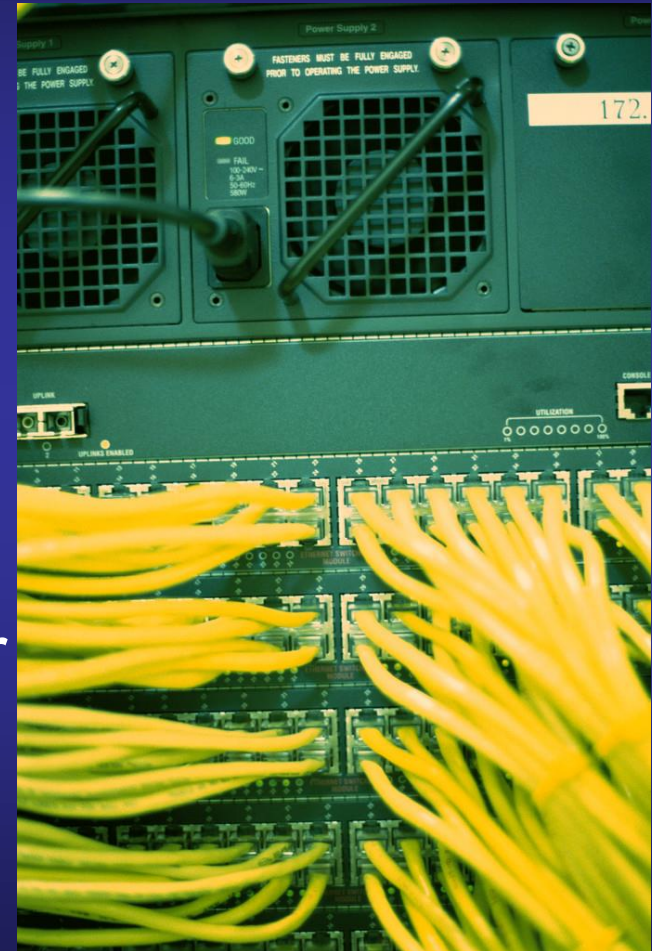
# Verification and Documentation

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- Tips for ensuring adequate documentation and verification of a negative case action:
- Case Notes
- Paperless or Automated System Documentation
- Documentation of Household Statements
- Withdraws
- Verification Checklists
- Notice of Denial

# Computer System Enhancements

- A robust highly functioning automated eligibility determination/processing system is key to achieving a level of performance in the Program, including negative actions.
- Misuse, misunderstanding or limitations of a system often cause households to receive incorrect notices of negative actions.



# Computer System Enhancements

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Some examples of changes to automated eligibility systems that reduce likelihood of errors occurring –

- Changing a system to prevent workers from denying an application prior to the 30<sup>th</sup> day.
- Updating the system quickly to address areas in which the system is not correctly applying policy.
- Providing adequate training and instruction for workers on using the system in a correct manner.

# Resources/Reference Tools for the Worker

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- Many agencies have found that providing eligibility staff with easy-to-use resource and reference tools has helped to reduce both invalid negative actions and payment errors.
- These tools serve as summaries and reminders of policy and procedures.
- The tools save staff time by reducing the number of occasions they might have to reference the voluminous policy manual.





# Resources/Reference Tools for the Worker

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- Examples of resource and reference tools:
- Checklist
- Desk Guides
- Tip Sheets
- Newsletters
- Interactive Game, Quizzes or Surveys

# Tools For the Client

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- Many of the denials, suspensions, and terminations occur because the client was not aware of the necessity to provide required information and/or the timeframe for doing so to ensure completion of the application.
- Suggestions for addressing client education and program accessibility that could help reduce the occurrence of invalid negative actions:
  - ✓ Education Video
  - ✓ Posters and/or Fliers
  - ✓ Awareness Campaign

# The Most Important Key to Lowering the Negative Error Rate

- FNS
- USDA
- QC
- QA
- CDSS
- EW
- DPSS



# Keys to Valid Negative Actions



## Actions



